

Testimony of Scott Carter
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Testimony on LD943 Hearing

Good afternoon, Chairpersons Meyers and Ingwersen, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for holding this public hearing and for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Scott Carter, and I am a resident of Augusta. My comments today are my own based on my knowledge of social safety net programs that support our State's veterans and citizens facing economic and related challenges.

Currently, I serve as an Advisory Board member of Fedcap Maine where I have had the privilege of supporting this organization's critical mission and seeing their absolute commitment to help veterans, individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency through housing, education, employment, and vital support services. In addition, I am an official volunteer at the Togus VA Center, and serve as the Red Cross Veterans Affairs Voluntary Services (VAVS) representative and am responsible for supporting coordination between the Red Cross and VA Health Care Facilities in the local area. I am also a proud veteran of the U.S. Air Force as is my wife.

Prior to moving to Maine in 2021, I enjoyed a 30 year career in the Federal government, including serving as Chief of Government Affairs at USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) that administers the Nations 16 Federal nutrition programs including SNAP from 2007 to 2019, and as Disaster Response Coordinator for the FNS Office of Emergency Management from 2019-2021 before retiring in November 2021. I have a deep knowledge of the laws, regulations and policies that must be followed by states and local governments and organizations like Fedcap when administering government assistance programs such as TANF as well as the requirements of those receiving the benefits, especially our veteran and military populations.

Why Fedcap Maine Succeeds

As the Committee knows, programs such as TANF have many requirements from income eligibility, work requirements, reporting requirements, and can be very difficult to apply for, but moreover, to ensure recipients are meeting these requirements to ensure they can continue to receive these critical benefits. It takes organizations such as

Fedcap that have a deep historical knowledge of assistance programs; trust of our veterans and the network of organizations that can ensure our Maine veterans and families succeed in getting back on their feet.

Fedcap Maine and their network of other supporting organizations play a crucial role in our state by providing families with the resources and guidance they need to overcome barriers to employment and financial stability. Through personalized case management, career readiness training, and job placement support, Fedcap helps people move from crisis to stability and long-term success.

As an advisory board member, I have seen the impact of this work firsthand. Fedcap doesn't just help people find jobs—it helps them build careers. By providing essential wraparound services such as childcare assistance, transportation support, and job training, Fedcap ensures that families have the tools they need to succeed and the numbers tell a compelling story:

- Since 2016, Fedcap has received over 29,000 referrals to support families receiving TANF.
- At any given time, Fedcap serves nearly 5,000 families across Maine.
- Over 1.05 million career advising appointments have helped individuals explore opportunities.
- More than 18,000 job placements have been made in industries such as healthcare, IT, and manufacturing.
- The average wage at placement is \$18.52 per hour—helping families move beyond poverty wages.
- Since 2016, graduates of Fedcap's program have contributed \$540 million to Maine's economy through their wages.

I would like to share one recent example of how Fedcap and its network made a difference to a veteran. A few months ago, there was a call to action as a veteran in Caribou lost his house due to a fire and very little resources to find a new place and was facing homelessness. However, he was in good hands. Fedcap and the network mobilized and provided the veteran with a hotel voucher for a few days while a shelter was located for him to stay. We identified a shelter in Augusta, so Fedcap provided a bus ticket from Caribou to Bangor then on to Augusta, where I picked him up at the Augusta bus station in my Red Cross and VA volunteer capacity and transported him to the Bread is Life veterans shelter in Augusta.

With all due respect, the State could not have provided a solution to this veterans emergency situation, only an organization like Fedcap and its network that have the expertise and flexibility to do so. This is one example of why I am against this legislation.

Fedcap Maine is not just a safety net—it is a launchpad for families striving for independence. The services it provides are essential to the well-being of our communities and our economy. I urge you to support the continued availability of this critical program for organizations like Fedcap and reject this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions from the Committee..